

REMARKS

As a result of this Amendment, claims 1-4, 6-13, and 15-25 are pending. No claims are cancelled or added. Pending claims 1, 2, 4, 6-10, 13, 17-20, and 22-25 are amended.

By this Amendment, claims have been broadened by cancellation of subject matter to better define patentable features of the invention. In this regard, attention is particularly invited to currently amended claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 18, 20, 22 and 24. Consistent therewith, certain of this subject matter has been placed into other claims. In this regard, attention is particularly invited to currently amended claims 4 (subject matter cancelled from claim 1), 17, 19 and 23. Support for currently amended claim 9 can be found in original claim 3 and in claim 7. Claim 19 is also amended for consistency with claim 6 from which it depends. Although subject matter cancelled from claims such as claims 4, 5, 9 and 14, is no longer claimed, the subject matter thereof remains within the scope of the claims of the present invention.

On page 2 of the Official Action, claim 1 and dependent claims 2-4 are rejected under S. 112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph. Although it is not clear to the undersigned what is not clear in the claim 1 language quoted, claim 1 is amended including the insertion of "adjacent". As it is believed that currently amended main claim 1 meets S. 112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, withdrawal of the rejection is believed to be in order and requested.

Also on page 2 of the Official Action, all pending claims are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over Dionne et al in view of Hicks, both newly applied against the claims. This rejection is respectfully traversed with respect to the main claims as originally filed, as presented by a Reply filed in September 2005, and as now presented. For the reasons set forth below, withdrawal of the rejection is believed to be in order and requested.

At the outset, it is respectfully pointed out that it

is believed that the urged reference combination is based upon hindsight. No adequate motivation for modifying Dionne in view of Hicks, is believed to have been pointed out. To the contrary, Dionne and Hicks appear to be complete in themselves.

By the rejection, the Office recognizes that Dionne discloses a foot placement grid, but that Hicks does NOT disclose a foot placement grid.

However, the Office overlooks that Dionne does NOT disclose a foot placement grid feature of main claims 1 and 10 wherein grid vertical alignment lines are spaced further apart from one another than adjacent ball position lines of a first set of ball position lines are spaced apart from one another. As explained at page 3, lines 16-25, and page 6, lines 12-29, of the Specification, precise and reproducible foot placement and alignment are critical to the invention, but Dionne's foot placement grid displays too many tightly spaced, grid spaces relative to a typical golfer's shoe size. By comparison, referring also to Figs. 1, 3, 5 and 6, this feature of the foot placement grid of main claims 1 and 10 assists precise and reproducible foot placement and alignment and easy recall thereof. Based on this advantageous feature, it is believed that main claims 1 and 10 are patentable over the reference combination.

By the rejection, the Office admits that Dionne does not disclose a sight line, but appears to rely on Hicks for the claimed sight lines feature of main claims 6 and 13. But, the Office overlooks that Hicks does NOT disclose, and is NOT modifiable to disclose, a first set of parallel line segments separated from a second set of parallel line segments by a gridless ball placement area, wherein the first set of parallel line segments and the second set of parallel line segments are located generally opposite from one another and cooperate to define a first plurality of sight lines. It appears from the Office's comments that the Office has mistakenly taken the position that it would have been obvious to provide a mirror

image of V-shaped base 14 of Hicks so as to provide a second set of target directional arrows located generally opposite from target directional arrows 68 on V-shaped base 14.

However, Hicks specifies that his structure includes an open gate 18. In this regard, attention is drawn to Fig. 1 of Hicks, which indicates that the path of the golfer's swing to the ball extends over or through the area of the open gate. The purpose of open gate 18 thus appears to be to prevent striking or otherwise contacting a swinging club with Hicks instructional aid. Accordingly, Hicks instructional aid appears to be NOT modifiable by CLOSING open gate 18 through the addition of a mirror image of V-shaped base 14.

Advantageously, the claimed second set of parallel line segments assists in defining a plurality of sight lines to sight a target and align the mat with the target (see page 7, lines 5-11, of the Specification), and can (in cooperation with the ball position lines) assist precise, reproducible ball positioning (see page 13, lines 1-9, of the Specification). Based on this advantageous feature, it is believed that main claims 6 and 13 are patentable over the reference combination. Also note that dependent claims 2 (dependent on claim 1) and 11 (dependent on claim 10) specify this feature.

With respect to dependent claims 3 (dependent on claim 1), 9 (dependent on claim 6), and 25 (dependent on claim 13) also missing from Hicks is the advantageous feature of a sight line in addition to target directional arrows 68. For this further reason, dependent claims 3, 9 and 25 are believed to be patentable over the reference combination.

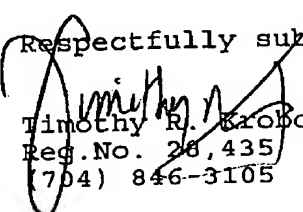
With respect to dependent claims 18, 20, 22 and 24, Dionne's grid appears to consist of square, not rectangular, spaces. With reference to Figs. 1, 3, 5 and 6, it can be understood that the claimed rectangular shape assists precise and reproducible foot placement and alignment.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all claims are patentable, and that issuance of a Notice of Allowance

is in order. Should any minor matter remain, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

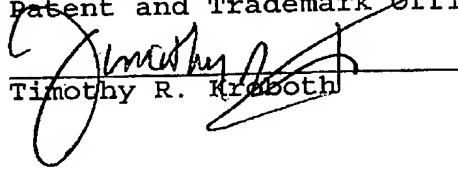
Previously, a Formal Drawing was submitted. Indication of acceptance of the drawing by the Office has been overlooked, and is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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CERTIFICATION OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this paper is being transmitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on November 6, 2006.

  
Timothy R. Kroboth

Date: November 6, 2006